Exploring the Implementation of Assessment for Learning in the Asian EFL Context: A Systematic Research Synthesis

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Abstract

While acknowledging the significant impact of Assessment for Learning (hereinafter referred to as AfL) on student learning, the specific factors that either support or impede its integration into daily classroom practices remain unclear in Asian EFL context. To address this gap, a comprehensive review was undertaken for the purpose of determining the AfL strategies applied in existing literature and the key factors that influence the effective implementation of AfL within particular contexts. This research synthesis summarized clarification and instruction of learning intentions and goals, teachers' feedback, peer assessment and self-assessment as main AfL strategies applied in Asian EFL classrooms and detected several key elements concerning teachers, students, assessments, and the overall context that influence the effect of the implementation of AfL. By shedding light on these various aspects, this systematic research synthesis contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the theoretical and practical considerations involved in the implementation of AfL.

Keywords: *Assessment for Learning, AfL, AfL Strategies, EFL, Systematic Research Synthesis*

Introduction

Over the past few decades, the matter of student engagement has undoubtedly emerged as a significant concern within the realm of pedagogy and learning, transcending various educational establishments (Bao, Zhang, & Dixon, 2021; Harris & Leeming, 2021; Kahu, 2013; Lim, 2017; Rahimi & Zhang, 2022). Numerous empirical investigations have demonstrated a correlative association between student engagement and several critical facets of the academic milieu, encompassing student satisfaction, experiential elements, as well as their academic attainments and accomplishments (Carini, Kuh, & Klein, 2006; Gan, An, & Liu, 2021; Lei, Cui, & Zhou, 2018; Teng & Zhang, 2018, 2020). Notwithstanding the paramount significance attributed to the active engagement of students in the learning process, there exists a pervasive apprehension that, in practical application, the task of effectively engaging students remains a

formidable challenge across virtually all educational levels. (Bundick, et al., 2014; Corso et al., 2013; Farr-Wharton et al., 2018; Skinner & Belmont, 1993; Taylor & Parsons, 2011). The potential solution of Assessment for Learning (AfL), characterized as a classroom-centered assessment methodology and pedagogical endeavor that recognizes the pivotal agency of students, is viable. Empirical inquiry has indicated that AfL holds promise in enhancing student engagement within the contexts of both learning and assessment (Jiang & Zhang, 2021; Stiggins, 2010; Swaffield, 2011).

While there is evidence supporting the notion that AfL can facilitate student learning, several studies indicate minimal to no impact on student learning outcomes. For example, Hendriks, Scheerens, and Sleegers (2014) conducted a meta-analysis examining the influence of formative assessment on student achievement. Their findings revealed that the majority of studies yielded limited or negligible effects. This phenomenon is plausibly attributable to the ineffective execution of formative assessment methodologies, exemplified by Assessment for Learning (AfL) (Bennett, 2011). The profound exploration of the foundational concepts underpinning Assessment for Learning (AfL) has presented notable challenges for numerous teachers. These challenges have been notably exacerbated by various constraints stemming from the specific policy milieu, exemplified by accountability pressures, as elucidated by Marshall and Drummond (2006).

To date, no comprehensive analysis has been undertaken in the context of Asian English as a Foreign Language (EFL) to consolidate the evidence from AfL studies and prioritize the identification of factors that either facilitate or impede its implementation. Previous reviews or studies have not prioritized exploring these factors as their main focus. Therefore, the present systematic research synthesis was directed toward the discernment of pertinent factors conducive to the efficacious implementation of Assessment for Learning (AfL). To methodically collect pertinent data from the chosen studies, four categories commonly delineated within the literature on educational evaluation, as outlined by Mandinach and Jackson (2012) and Schildkamp and Kuiper (2010), were employed: the teacher, the student, assessment practices, and the context.

Method

Research Synthesis Strategy

Ortega (2015) suggests three steps to conduct a systematic research synthesis. First, research questions should be specified and synthesized. Second, a comprehensive set of data sources is to be identified, with consideration of criteria for the inclusion and exclusion of published materials. Third, a content analysis of the published studies is conducted in the research synthesis.

Following the established method by Ortega (2015), this research synthesis is to explore the literature databases by searching relevant studies from major journals of second/foreign language learning and teaching first. Then inclusion and exclusion criteria will be employed to narrow down the scope of articles for reviewing next. The selected studies will then be coded and evaluated with relative criteria. Finally, the results will be synthesized to answer the research questions. Specifically, the research is to be implemented in the following four steps.

Step 1: To Retrieve Previous Studies Relevant to the Implementation of AfL in EFL Classrooms
To ensure journal quality, the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI) is proved to be the most critical criterion (Park, 2022). Several SSCI journals focusing on foreign/second language learning and teaching will be selected for further retrieval. They are identified as renowned SSCI journals dedicated to second/foreign language learning and teaching, and from these major journals relevant studies will be searched to be further scrutinized.

Step 2: To Select Relevant Studies in Accordance with Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria
To comprehensively retrieve studies that are of great concern in terms of the implementation of AfL in EFL classrooms, the inclusion criteria include peer-reviewed journal articles (including research and educational briefs) and conference proceeding papers focusing on the implementation of AfL in the context of EFL classrooms. Databases and journals for publications in the past two decades will be searched. Non-research-based articles, such as editorials and book reviews will be excluded. Besides, empirical studies conducted outside Asian EFL contexts will be excluded. To increase the reliability of inclusion, the eligibility of the selected articles for final analysis will be cross-checked after two rounds of search and initial screening.

The key search terms include: "AfL" and "EFL learning/teaching". The search will be conducted in major databases and renowned journals of second/foreign language learning and teaching. The time frame of publications will be controlled within the years from 2003 to 2022. Titles and abstracts of the publications will be screened for relevance of the search through the search process. Studies will be selected with the following two steps: a broad scrutiny of a focus on the implementation of AfL in Asian EFL classrooms, and a specific scrutiny of various AfL strategies applied and factors influencing the implementation of AfL in EFL classrooms.

Step 3: To Evaluate the Relevant Studies Selected: Coding Process
To evaluate the articles selected, each article will be coded based on the research questions.
In this study, five questions have already been prepared for the selection of data analysis of studies to be synthesized at the outset as follows:
1). In what context were AfL strategies conducted?
2). Who were the participants in the classroom using AfL strategies?
3). What kind of AfL strategies were employed in the classroom?
4). What type of data was gathered in the literature?
5). What were the challenges and limitations of using AfL in the classroom?

Step 4: To Analyze the Results-Findings of the Research Synthesis
In the discussion part, a general interpretation of the results will be provided. Possible limitations of the previous studies included in the synthesis and limitations in terms of the review processes will also be summarized. Implications of the results for practice, policy and future research will also be discussed at the end.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

To comprehensively retrieve studies concerning the implementation of AfL in Asian EFL classrooms, the inclusion criteria include the following items:

1). The study was published in the past two decades (2003-2022).

2). The study was published as a scientific, peer-reviewed journal article.

3). The study focused on the implementation of AfL in EFL classroom practices.

The first criterion is to make sure the studies reviewed reflect the current situation of AfL's influence in education.

The second criterion is designed to ensure the inclusion of studies that exhibit a sufficient level of scientific rigor. Accordingly, studies disseminated through non-peer-reviewed channels, such as books, book chapters, and conference proceedings, were not taken from consideration. During the data extraction process, a thorough investigation was conducted to assess the quality of the remaining studies in a comprehensive manner.

The third criterion narrowed down the selection of studies included in the review by specifying the educational context. Specifically, it focused on studies that examined the application of AfL in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom practices in general. This restriction was crucial in identifying the key factors that influence the successful implementation of AfL in the corresponding educational context.

The exclusion criteria include the following items:

1). Studies with no full-text versions of the publication available were excluded.

2). Studies not based on an empirical study were excluded.

3). Studies implemented outside Asian context were excluded.

Through the first criterion of exclusion, studies without full-text versions of the publication were excluded. Because it is impossible to do careful scrutiny for required data in this case.

Under the auspices of the second exclusion criterion, theoretical articles, reviews, and opinion pieces were systematically excluded from the scope of this review. The emphasis was placed on evidence-based factors that have demonstrated their impact on the implementation of Assessment for Learning (AfL) in practical settings. While generalizing from the results of case studies should be approached with caution, these studies were included in the selection due to their provision of practical examples within real-life contexts. This inclusion was deemed essential, especially in the context of formative assessment, and particularly for AfL.

Through the third criterion of exclusion, the study with a context outside Asia was excluded. Because this review is done for the purpose of investigating the situation of the implementation of AfL in Asia as shown in the title. This review is targeted at potential related future studies in Asian countries, especially in China.

The key search terms include: AfL (Assessment for learning) and EFL learning/teaching. The search will be conducted in 10 major databases or renowned journals of second/foreign language learning and teaching selected. Then, the search was expanded to Google Scholar to ensure the richness of the materials.
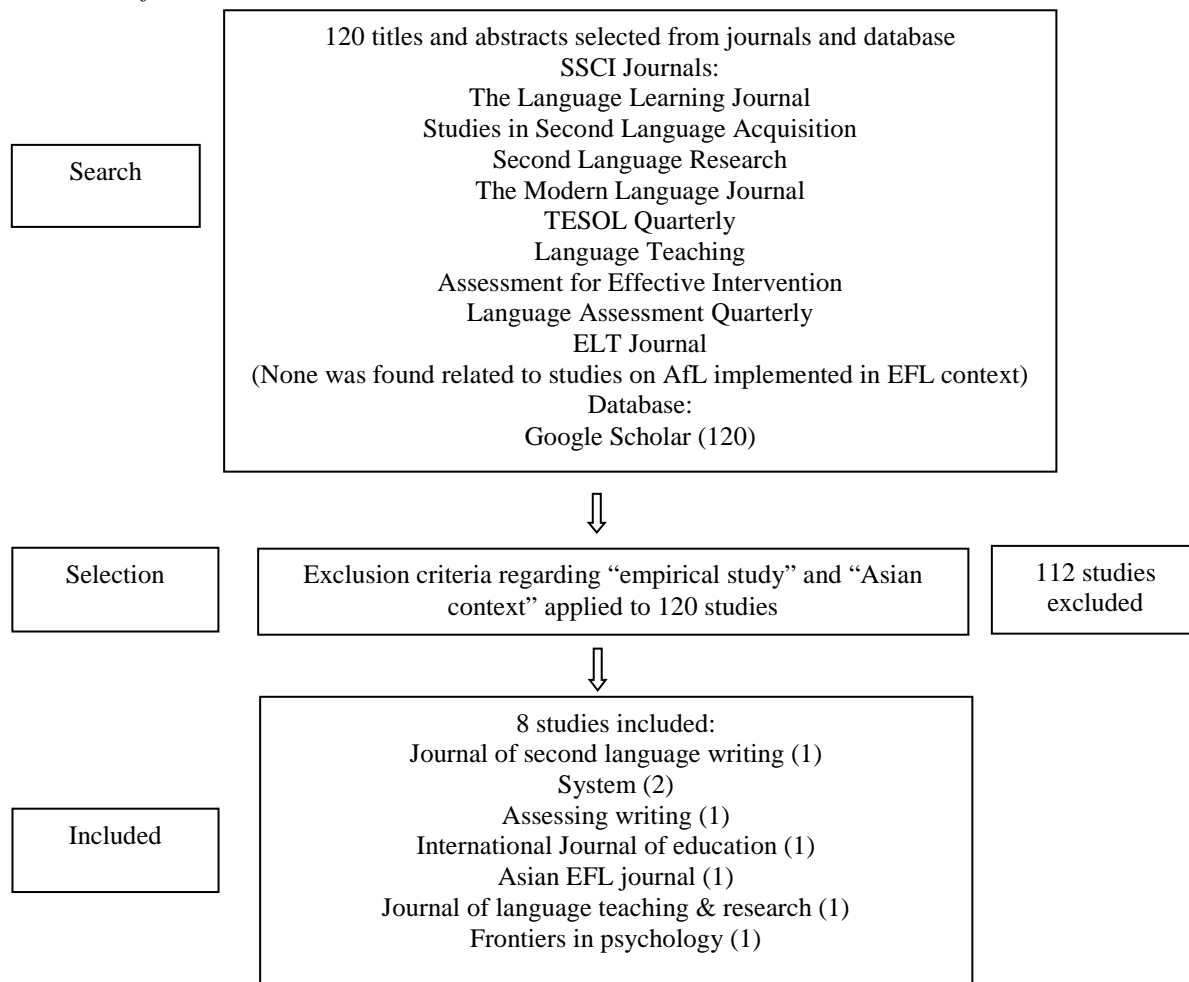
Selection

Based on the key search terms, titles and abstracts of the published articles were first screened for relevance to this research synthesis, and a total of 120 papers with full-text versions were

found. Then, each article was read to establish a concrete data set for the review. After the second examination referring to all listed exclusion criteria, among all the articles selected, 8 empirical studies from Google scholar were finally selected for detailed scrutiny as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1

A Flowchart of Search & Selection Process

Search	120 titles and abstracts selected from journals and database SSCI Journals: The Language Learning Journal Studies in Second Language Acquisition Second Language Research The Modern Language Journal TESOL Quarterly Language Teaching Assessment for Effective Intervention Language Assessment Quarterly ELT Journal (None was found related to studies on AfL implemented in EFL context) Database: Google Scholar (120)

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Selection	Exclusion criteria regarding "empirical study" and "Asian context" applied to 120 studies	112 studies excluded

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Included	8 studies included: Journal of second language writing (1) System (2) Assessing writing (1) International Journal of education (1) Asian EFL journal (1) Journal of language teaching & research (1) Frontiers in psychology (1)

Results

The Context and Participants of the Studies Conducted Regarding AfL Strategies

The delineation of the research context and the identification of study participants were characterized by a straightforward and comparatively uncomplicated process. Studies were detected to be conducted in both primary, secondary and tertiary education contexts, answering the question of the context in which AfL was investigated. Because the studies were purposefully selected by targeting Asian countries, three countries (i.e., China, Japan, and Turkey) appeared in the reviewed articles. As shown in Table 1, six studies, approximately three-fourth, were conducted in China. One study was conducted in Japan, and one in Turkey.

Table 1

Research Contexts

Countries	#	Studies
China	6	Lee (2007), Lee & Coniam (2013), Mak & Lee (2014), Wu, Zhang, & Dixon (2021), Wu, Zhang, & Liu (2021), Zhu & Pan (2017)
Japan	1	White (2009)
Turkey	1	Öz (2014)
Total	8	

Regarding participants, as the studies were conducted in three levels of education contexts, primary, secondary and tertiary education, participants were composed of teachers from primary schools, secondary schools and universities. Besides, the implementation of AfL investigated in the reviewed papers also took students' perspectives into consideration, so students from those educational contexts were also included.

AfL Strategies Employed in Asian EFL Classrooms

The research question regarding AfL strategies adopted in Asian EFL context is a genuinely intriguing question given the purpose of this study to provide extensive insights into the trend and methodology of assessment reform in EFL education. In the 8 reviewed studies, five categories of AfL strategies listed as follows are all revealed as is illustrated in Table 2:

1). Clarification and instruction of learning intentions and goals and criteria for success.

2). Adoption of informal and formal assessment in the form of class activities: questions and classroom discussion, etc. to gather evidence of student learning.

3). Generation of formative feedback from teachers to facilitate students' learning process.

4). Peer assessment to facilitate improvement of students' learning.

5). Self-assessment to facilitate improvement of students' learning.

Table 2

AfL Strategies

Strategies	Details	Studies
Learning goals and intentions clarification and instruction	3 studies among 8 involved teachers' clarification and instruction to students as regards learning intentions and goals and success criteria	Lee & Coniam, (2013), Wu, Zhang, & Dixon (2021),Wu, Zhang & Liu (2021)
Formal/ Informal assessment	3 studies shed a light on the importance of informal and formal assessment in the form of class activities for the purpose of collecting evidence of student learning	Lee & Coniam, (2013),Wu, Zhang, & Dixon (2021),Wu, Zhang, & Liu (2021)
Teachers' feedback	4 out of 8 studies recognized the generation of formative feedback from teachers as a strategy facilitating students' learning process	Öz (2014), Lee (2007), Wu, Zhang, & Dixon (2021), Wu, Zhang, & Liu (2021)
Peer assessment/ Self-assessment	5 out of 8 studies selected involved peer-assessment and self-assessment as useful AfL strategies implemented in relevant contexts.	Lee & Coniam (2013), Mak & Lee (2014), White (2009), Wu, Zhang, & Dixon (2021), Wu, Zhang, & Liu (2021)

First, three studies (Lee & Coniam, 2013; Wu, Zhang, & Dixon, 2021; Wu, Zhang, & Liu, 2021) among eight involved teachers' clarification and instruction to students as regards learning intentions and goals and success criteria. Lee and Coniam (2013) outlined the process of incorporating AfL into writing, which comprises three main stages: planning, instruction, and assessment. They devised a comprehensive plan for the entire academic year, distributing the workload, creating instructional materials centered around the recount genre, devising task-specific feedback forms, and subsequently exchanging them with fellow colleagues. During the second phase, teachers employed explicit instruction within the classroom to adequately prepare students for assessments, with each teacher following a consistent procedure rooted in the teaching-learning cycle proposed by Feez (1998). Wu, Zhang and Dixon (2021) in their study listed four factors representing the core AfL strategies: Communicating Learning and Quality, Questioning and Classroom Discussion, Teacher Feedback, and Peer- and self-assessment. Wu, Zhang, and Liu (2021) in their study restated main components of AfL strategies as goal communication, effective in-class assessment tasks, teacher feedback, peer-assessment and self-assessment. Clear goal communication is of great importance in terms of the implementation of AfL strategies. Comprehending learning goals and success criteria necessitates educators to not only engage students in the process of defining goals but also to engage in negotiation rather than dictation when conveying to students the anticipated learning outcomes and the desired standard of performance. (Carless, 2015; Sadler, 1989).

Second, three studies (Lee & Coniam, 2013; Wu, Zhang, & Dixon, 2021; Wu, Zhang, & Liu, 2021) shed light on the importance of informal and formal assessment in the form of class activities for the purpose of collecting evidence of student learning. Lee and Coniam (2013) articulated the correlation between the Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategy and the endeavor to amass empirical indications of student learning. Teachers are encouraged to actively involve their students by employing open-ended queries and fostering effective discourse, thereby affording students opportunities to manifest their profound acquisition of knowledge (Erickson, 2007; Heritage, 2013; Ruiz-Primo, 2011). Wu, Zhang, & Dixon (2021) and Wu, Zhang and Liu (2021) incorporated effective in-class activities or tasks as effective AfL strategies in teaching practices. It is associated with the acquisition of evidence pertaining to student learning. In this regard, instructors are prompted to actively involve their students through the utilization of open-ended inquiries and productive dialogues, thereby affording students the prospect to unveil their profound comprehension. (Erickson, 2007; Heritage, 2013; Ruiz-Primo, 2011).

Third, four studies (Lee, 2007; Öz, 2014; Wu, Zhang, & Dixon, 2021; Wu, Zhang, & Liu, 2021) out of eight recognized the generation of formative feedback from teachers as a strategy facilitating students' learning process. Lee (2007) examined the characteristics of teacher feedback and its roles within the teaching-learning-assessment process in the context of the writing classroom. The study highlighted the need for increased focus on the integration of AfL in the writing classroom, particularly emphasizing the utilization of feedback for formative objectives. Öz (2014) reported in his research high levels of perceived monitoring and scaffolding practices of AfL. Based on variables such as years of teaching experience, gender, and the distinction between private and public schools, notable variations were observed among teachers in their assessments, particularly in terms of monitoring to support

student learning. Wu, Zhang and Dixon (2021) and Wu, Zhang and Liu (2021) also incorporated teacher feedback as an effective AfL strategy in teaching practices. Utilizing teacher feedback as an Assessment for Learning (AfL) strategy serves to promote active student engagement in the feedback process. Hence, teachers should abstain from delivering unilaterally generated comments to their students and instead foster interactive teacher-student dialogues during the feedback provision. (Ajjawi & Boud, 2018; Carless, 2013; Molloy et al., 2020).

Fourth, five (White, 2009; Lee & Coniam, 2013; Mak & Lee, 2014; Wu, Zhang, & Dixon, 2021; Wu, Zhang, & Liu, 2021) out of eight selected studies involved peer-assessment and self-assessment as useful AfL strategies implemented in relevant contexts. In a peer-assessment case study conducted by White (2009), the focus was on exploring student perspectives regarding a student-centered assessment approach and examining its efficacy in fostering effective learning. Overall, survey responses revealed that students held positive perspectives towards the utilization of peer assessment, and this process undeniably contributed to the enhancement of student learning. Lee and Conium (2013) emphasized the necessity for teachers to promote student participation within the feedback process, advocating against the one-way dissemination of teacher-generated comments to students. Instead, they recommended the inclusion of students in teacher-student discussions during the feedback delivery (Ajjawi & Boud, 2018; Carless, 2013; Molloy et al., 2020). Mak and Lee (2014) implemented students' peer assessment and their self-assessment in the during-writing and after-writing stage. In the during-writing stage, the students carried out peer assessment after producing the first draft. After writing, the students recorded the number of errors they made in the predetermined areas of focus in an error log. Additionally, the teachers provided students with the chance to review their work and engage in reflective practices regarding their writing. This involved the completion of a reflection sheet. Wu, Zhang and Dixon (2021) also listed peer and self-assessment as effective AfL strategies of teaching practice. Wu, Zhang and Liu (2021) believed that teachers should be mandated to facilitate the empowerment of students in the role of assessors, wherein students are entrusted to provide feedback and commentary on their own as well as their peers' work and performance. (Panadero, Andrade, & Brookhard, 2018; Wu, 2020; Wu, Zhang, & Dixon, 2021).

Types of Data Gathered in the Literature
Studies subjected to review exhibited a diverse array of data collection methods sourced from multiple avenues. Among the data collected, two studies utilized quantitative measures, comprising survey questionnaires (2 instances) and test scores (2 instances). Furthermore, three types of qualitative data were identified, encompassing interviews (6 instances), survey questionnaires (2 instances), and observations (3 instances). Clearly, text samples (e.g., teachers' reflective journals, written feedback, self-reports, and narratives) were the major source of data in studies on AfL strategies applied in EFL context.

Challenges and Limitations of Using AFL in the Classroom
Through a review conducted on the factors influencing the implementation of AfL strategies, the identified factors can be grouped into four categories, "student", "teacher", "assessment"

and "context", as is illustrated in Table 3. AfL strategies must be implemented properly to diminish the negative effect of these factors to facilitate the EFL teaching and learning process.

Table 3

Factors Influencing the Implementation of AfL

Factor categories	Details	Studies
Student	Among 8 studies reviewed, 2 of them analyzed student factors influencing the implementation of AfL in EFL classrooms.	White (2009), Zhu & Pan (2017)
Teacher	In 4 out of 8 studies reviewed, teacher factors were spotted influencing the implementation of AfL.	White (2009), Lee & Coniam, (2013), Wu, Zhang, & Dixon (2021), Wu, Zhang & Liu (2021)
Assessment	2 out of 8 studies reviewed showed that the assessment itself also influence the implementation of AfL.	Öz (2014), Mak & Lee (2014)
Context	2 out of 8 studies reviewed showed that the context greatly determined how successfully the implementation of AfL was facilitated.	Lee (2007), Lee & Coniam (2013)

Among eight studies reviewed, two of them (White, 2009; Zhu & Pan, 2017) analyzed student factors influencing the implementation of AfL in EFL classrooms. According to White (2009), student perspectives on the perceived benefits and drawbacks of peer assessment will differ based on individual values, objectives, and abilities. Zhu & Pan (2017) highlighted the potential to improve learners' motivation, beliefs, and learning strategies through the implementation of Assessment for Learning (AfL).

In four (Lee & Coniam, 2013; White, 2009; Wu, Zhang, & Dixon, 2021; Wu, Zhang, & Liu, 2021) out of eight studies reviewed, teacher factors were spotted influencing the implementation of AfL. White (2009) discovered that teacher perspectives on assessment, influenced by the dynamics of professional power relationships within the classroom, have a significant impact on student attitudes towards the implementation of Assessment for Learning (AfL). Lee and Coniam (2013) concluded that teachers' comprehension of the principles and practices of Assessment for Learning (AfL) is a vital factor that supports the successful implementation of AfL. Wu, Zhang and Dixon (2021) mentioned that it poses a formidable challenge for Chinese teachers who espouse an alternative paradigm of the teacher-student dynamic and who lack familiarity with the corresponding strategies of Assessment for Learning (AfL) to appreciate, adopt, or integrate AfL principles into their pedagogical methodologies. Wu, Zhang, and Liu (2021) contended that the assessment literacy of teachers appeared to exert an influence on the utilization of Assessment for Learning (AfL) to engage students within the classroom environment. Furthermore, teachers' convictions concerning the interplay between goal orientation and motivation, a factor of intrapersonal nature, were also identified as determinants impacting the implementation of AfL. Finally, an interpersonal factor related to trust between teachers and students was also confirmed to be of great importance in the implementation of AfL.

Öz (2014) ascertained that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors predominantly employ formal or summative assessments, commonly referred to as Assessment of Learning (AOL), as opposed to formative assessments or Assessment for Learning (AFL) techniques (Boraie, 2012). This inclination is attributed to the consequential influence exerted by terminal assessments or examinations on language instruction, learning, and assessment in settings where the paramount focus lies on students' performance in final examinations, rather than their accomplishments within the context of process-based learning, portfolio assessment, project evaluation, or self- and peer-assessment. Mak and Lee (2014), based on activity theory and its notion of contradiction, determined that the adoption of Assessment for Learning (AfL) innovation in writing may face obstacles unless the contradictions within the activity systems are effectively addressed and resolved. The introduction of Assessment for Learning (AfL) as a new element within the established assessment activity system created a conflict with conventional practices, consequently limiting the teachers' ability to fully implement AfL assessment initiatives within the writing classroom.

As listed in Table 3, two (Lee, 2007; Lee & Coniam, 2013) out of eight studies reviewed showed that the context greatly determined how successfully the implementation of AfL was facilitated. According to Lee (2007), teachers' feedback practices are shaped by the institutional context and values, which may pose challenges in harnessing the full potential of assessment for learning through effective utilization of feedback. Lee and Coniam (2013) discovered that a school culture that prioritizes providing extensive error feedback and an examination-oriented system that emphasizes summative scores can present significant barriers to the implementation and advancement of Assessment for Learning (AfL).

Discussion

This research synthesis reports critical findings by answering five research questions and yields three major ideas for discussion. First, the findings derived from this comprehensive review indicate that the majority of the investigations were grounded in a limited-scale, qualitative research framework, a characteristic also acknowledged by Baird et al. (2014). Scant studies within the Assessment for Learning (AfL) domain are underpinned by expansive-scale or quantitative research methodologies. In instances where investigations do center on extensive AfL implementation, outcomes typically gravitate towards predominantly encompassing student and teacher perceptions as the principal dependent variables (cf. Hopfenbeck & Stobart, 2015). This research synthesis found that previous studies attached great importance to the identification of AfL strategies adopted or could be used in classroom practices. What is more, factors concerning teachers, students, context and assessment were detected to be influential in the process of the implementation of AfL strategies. However, studies on how to implement AfL strategies in real practices were scarcely explored. The paucity of empirical studies with practical designs on the implementation of AfL strategies to improve assessment and thus improve students' language proficiency should be addressed as a top emergency.

Second, summarized by this synthesis from studies reviewed, AfL strategies are applicable in various contexts ranging from primary education, secondary education to tertiary education. Thus, students and teachers from primary schools, secondary schools and universities are among participants of previous studies. However, AfL strategies as effective methods in EFL

teaching can also be applied to other educational contexts, such as vocational education or even a specific group in tertiary education, graduate students' education. As was stated by Sandal (2023), vocational teaching is distinguished by the incorporation of formative assessment as an inherent component of instructional practices throughout the course of students' learning journeys, with learning guided by the inherent sequences and phases within a given task or production process. Besides, there has been an increase in the demand for graduate education (Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), 2017). AfL strategies that have already been applied to tertiary education should also be explored in graduate education. More relevant empirical studies are expected to be carried out in such extended contexts in future research.

Third, in the empirical studies reviewed in this synthesis, independent or several elements combined were explored separately, instead of all elements of AfL as a whole, in terms of their impact on EFL acquisition. Mumm, Karm and Remmik (2016) also noted that the majority of research on Assessment for Learning (AfL) have historically investigated its constituent practices in isolation, with a limited minority adopting an integrated and comprehensive perspective. However, professional development should explicitly address how all five AfL strategies can be integrated in classroom practice in order to maximize its potential impact (Lee, 2011). Therefore, every AfL element should be taken as an integral part of the implementation of AfL in the whole teaching and learning process, and future studies should be oriented towards a nuanced exploration of the intricate interdependencies among the fundamental components of AfL.

Conclusion

A meta-analysis and comprehensive evaluation undertaken to assess the impacts of formative assessment strategies, including Assessment for Learning (AfL), reveals that formative assessment frequently yields limited or negligible effects (Hendriks et al., 2014). This phenomenon appears to be attributed to the frequently suboptimal execution of formative assessment strategies (Bennet, 2011). The primary focus of this study was a particular form of formative assessment known as AfL (Assessment for Learning). The study conducted a systematic review to explore AfL strategies employed in the specific EFL education context of Asia and potential factors influencing the successful implementation of AfL. It is crucial to ensure proper implementation of AfL in order to achieve enhanced student learning outcomes.

This paper presents valuable insights for EFL teachers, educators, and researchers regarding the ongoing assessment reform in EFL education. The findings from this review offer guidance for future research and contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the various aspects involved in implementing AfL (Assessment for Learning) in EFL classrooms, both in theory and practice. To enhance our knowledge further, it is recommended that future studies focus on large-scale research conducted within specific local contexts. These studies should consider the influential factors identified in this research as crucial for effective implementation of AfL. The conceptual framework delineated in this manuscript may serve as a foundation for guiding practical endeavors, such as the implementation of comprehensive professional development programs encompassing the entirety of the school community. Nevertheless, it is imperative to recognize that the intricacies of classroom dynamics and the distinct classroom context exert significant influence upon pedagogical practices. Therefore, it is not possible to

provide an exact formula for success, and local practitioners must adapt the identified factors for AfL implementation to their specific context to maximize student learning outcomes.

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Ethics Declarations

Competing Interests

No, there are no conflicting interests.

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